

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. (previously presented) An extensible beam comprising:

a first, elongate, element defining a channel therein, the first elongate element comprising: an upper portion which provides an upwardly facing surface to support materials above the beam, and first and second lateral portions which project generally perpendicular from respective opposing sides of the upper portion so that the upper portion and lateral portions define the channel; and respective first and second support portions which project inwardly from the respective first and second lateral portions; and

a second element adapted to move, in the channel, relative to the first elongate element in order to vary the amount of overlap between the first and second elements and thereby vary the length of the beam;

wherein the second element is in the form of a frame comprising: first and second generally parallel spaced apart elongate bars which form lateral sides of the frame and which slidingly engage the first and second support portions, respectively; a first cross member which extends between, and spaces apart respective first ends of the first and second bars, and forms a first transverse member of the frame; and a second cross member, spaced apart from the first cross member in the direction of elongation of the bars, which extends between, and spaces apart, the first and second bars and forms a second transverse member of the frame and wherein the first and second bars are separately formed pieces.

2. (cancelled)

3. (cancelled)

4. (previously presented) An extensible beam as claimed in claim 1, wherein the first element comprises a length of metal C-section.

5. (previously presented) An extensible beam as claimed in claim 1, wherein the first and

second bars have substantially greater thickness than the lateral portions of the first element.

6. (previously presented) An extensible beam as claimed in claim 1, wherein the bars are solid bars.

7. (cancelled)

8. (previously presented) An extensible beam as claimed in claim 1, wherein in use, with the beam in a horizontal orientation, the vertical height of each bar is approximately four times its thickness.

9. (previously presented) An extensible beam as claimed in claim 1, wherein in use, with the beam in a horizontal orientation, the height of each bar is smaller than the height of the lateral portions of the first element.

10. (previously presented) An extensible beam as claimed in claim 9, wherein the height of each bar is less than 80% of the height of the lateral portions of the first element.

11. (cancelled)

12. (cancelled)

13. (previously presented) An extensible beam as claimed in claim 1, wherein the second cross member extends between respective second ends of the first and second bars.

14. (cancelled)

15. (cancelled)

16. (previously presented) An extensible beam as claimed in claim 1, wherein the second element is located at least partially inside the channel of the first element and is adapted, in use, to be moved further into the first element in order to reduce the length of the beam, and to be moved further out of the first element in order to increase the length of the beam, and wherein in the extended configuration less than half of the second element can extend out of the first element.

17. (cancelled)

18. (previously presented) An extensible beam as claimed in claim 1, wherein the second element further comprises a web portion extending between the first and second bars, the web portion being adapted to prevent parts of a user from being caught within the beam during use.

19-21. (cancelled)

22. (previously presented) An extensible beam as claimed in claim 1, wherein the first and second support portions are welded to, and supported by, the respective first and second lateral portions.

23. (cancelled)

24. (previously presented) An extensible beam as claimed in claim 16, wherein in use, the relative positions of the first and second elements are constrained so that substantially the entire length of each support portion is in contact with, or closely adjacent to, a part of the corresponding bar, irrespective of whether the second element is retracted or extended relative to the first element.

25. (previously presented) An extensible beam as claimed in claim 1 wherein a first abutment portion of the second element is adapted to engage part of the first element to restrict axial movement of the second element away from the first element, such that not more than 50% of the length of the second element can extend out of the first element.

26-33. (cancelled)

34. (previously presented) An extensible beam as claimed in claim 1, wherein in use, the bars are spaced apart from the lateral portions by one or more parts of members which form the support portions.

35. (cancelled)

36. (previously presented) An extensible beam as claimed in claim 16, wherein the second element is dimensioned so that a degree of lateral movement within the first element is possible.

37. (cancelled)

38. (cancelled)

39. (previously presented) An extensible beam as claimed in claim 1, wherein one, or both, of the first and second elements is made substantially from aluminium.

40. (cancelled)

41. (previously presented) An extensible beam as claimed in claim 1, wherein the extensible beam is a reusable extensible lintel.

42. (previously presented) An extensible beam as claimed in claim 41, wherein the second cross member is adapted to receive a force in order to assist retraction of the second element into the first elongate element.

43. (previously presented) An extensible beam as claimed in claim 1, wherein the first elongate element includes a first engaging portion, at an end thereof for engaging a structure defining a first side of an opening and providing support for the beam relative to the structure, wherein the second element includes a second engaging portion for engaging a structure defining a second side of an opening and providing support for the beam relative to the structure so that the beam can be supported across the opening, and wherein the engaging portions comprise respective horizontally orientated axially extending portions the upper surfaces of which are substantially coplanar with the upwardly facing surface of the first elongate element.

44. (previously presented) An extensible beam as claimed in claim 1, wherein the first and second support portions are provided by opposite side portions of a member which extends between the first and second lateral portions of the first elongate element.